

AN INTRODUCTION TO Alaska Gold Tokens

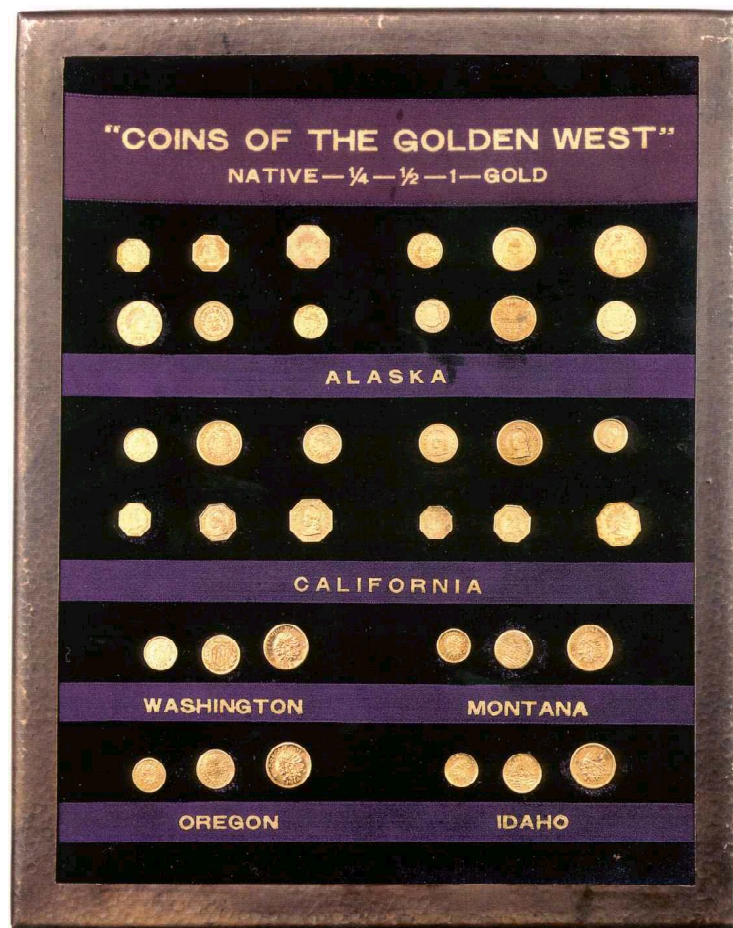
by Mike Locke

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In 1915 at the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition Farran Zerbe promoted "The Coins of the Golden West" set of 36 gold tokens. Although it is a common belief that this set was made exclusively for sale at the exposition, Farran Zerbe bought the sets from M Hart of San Francisco and packaged them in the Shreve & Co. hammered copper picture frames that he also used for the U.S. commemorative coin set. M Hart continued to market the set into the 1920s. M Hart advertised the tokens in the set as "solid 10K native gold". The cost of the set was \$20. The tokens in the set are an assemblage of items that were produced at least as early as 1907.

12 of the tokens from "The Coins of the Golden West" set are marked Alaska Gold. These are divided into 3 major types: Pinch tokens, Parka head tokens, and A.Y.P.E. tokens.

(Ed. Note concerning illustrations. The frame to the right is smaller than actual size. Tokens are shown larger than actual size and not to scale.)



The Pinch tokens in the set were made with Indian head designs, the word PINCH marking the denomination, and dates from 1897 to 1902 in octagonal 1/4, round 1/4, octagonal 1/2, round 1/2, octagonal ONE, and round ONE sizes. A few issues with other dates were made, but are not the varieties in the Farran Zerbe set or M Hart advertisements. One variety has a ring of stars rather than a wreath. Thomas Elder sold a set of Pinch tokens in his sale #10 in early 1907. Many Pinch token varieties are known with two very distinct thickness planchets.

The Parka head tokens feature an Inuit wearing a parka, with date 1911 in round 1/4, round 1/2, and round ONE sizes. These are the most mysterious tokens in the series and also the most rare. In "Small California and Territorial Gold Coins", R.H. Burnie claims 9 varieties of Parka head token exist, but the author has only been able to locate 4 varieties.



Continued on page 27

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Special thanks to Mike Locke for saving your editor a lot of work! Just when I thought I was going to have to dream up an article for this month, I was saved. Mike specializes in small gold tokens, such as the Alaska gold tokens presented in his article. The article is an introduction only, listing major types. If you have access to the internet, you can check out Mike's home page at www.calgoldcoin.com. The link to take you directly to the Alaska gold tokens is: www.calgoldcoin.com/alaska.htm, and on this page, you will find many varieties of the major types listed in the article. If you explore Mike's pages, you will find many interesting items. But be ready - the pages are image intensive, and may take some time to load.

It is always nice to see Alaska businesses recognized in a positive manor, especially if they are numismatic in nature.

An article in the April 28, 2004 Fairbanks Daily News-Miner noted that Mike and Michele Robuck of the Alaska Mint were recently named 2004 Alaska Small Business Persons of the Year by the Alaska District of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

An article in the May 3, 2004 Coin World describes the process of applying gold relief to silver coins and medals developed by Goldenhance of Anchorage. The process has been used by the Perth Mint, Royal Canadian Mint, Royal Hawaiian Mint, Washington Mint, Sunshine Mint and, of course, the Alaska Mint.

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, published 10 times per year, is a publication of Alaska Rare Coins. All articles remain the property of the authors and may not be reprinted without their consent.

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PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

Anchorage , The Club, 12½¢, B-12b	OB15.00NB
Anchorage , Union Club, set of 4 B38 a-d	12.59
Barrow , Tony's, 5¢, B-1a	14.05
Cape Newenham , NCOOM, 25¢, B-1f	15.00OB
Chatanika , Dempsey Hotel, 25¢, B-3a	25.00OB
Chitina , Navada Bar, B-4a	112.50
Circle , Collins & Strait, 10¢, B-1a	203.51
Cleary , W&W, 25¢, B-5a	OB50.00NB
Cordova , The Club, 12½¢, B-7a	OB25.00
Cordova , Club Billiard Hall, 5¢ B-9a	41.99
Cordova , Rosswog, 12½¢, B-34b	103.51
Fairbanks , Pioneer Hotel, 5¢, b-45a	32.00
Homer , Bayside, 50¢, B-1a	16.10
Juneau , Occidental Hotel, 12½¢, B-56b	79.00
(Juneau) , Garnick encased, 1946, hs	15.60
(Juneau) , Garnick encased, 1947, round	16.16
Ketchikan , Abercrombie's, 8¢, B-1c	14.59
Ketchikan , Artic Club Rooms, \$1 B-4b	76.00
Ketchikan , Lange's 10¢, B-29a	31.00
Ketchikan , Lange's \$1, B-29c	36.00
Ketchikan , Lange's \$1, B-29d	OB20.00NB
Ketchikan , Lotus Buffett, 6¼¢, B-31c	48.00
Ketchikan , Nelson Hotel, \$1, B-34b	25.00OB
Ketchikan , Pioneer, 25¢, B-42b	54.33
Ketchikan , Pioneer, 25¢, B-46bii	54.33
Ketchikan , Stedman, 12½¢, B-60ai	OB30.00NB
Ketchikan , Stedman, 12½¢, B-60aii	15.50
Ketchikan , Stedman, \$1, B-60di	61.00
Ketchikan , Stedman, 25¢, (3) B-60c	52.00
Long , Willis, 25¢, B-1a	49.50
Long , Willis, 25¢, B-1a	51.00
Skagway , J.F. Anderson, 25¢, B-1b	281.49
Skagway , Mascot Saloon, 12½¢, B-17c	25.00OB
Tanana , Yukon Saloon, B-11a	456.00
Valdez , Copper Block Buffet, 12½¢, B-4a	15.50
Good Luck Bank of AK , advertising note Whittemore's	42.01RNM
Encased Cent , Souvenir of AK, 1952	16.50
AYPE Gold , set of three	561.50

Fred Holabird Sale, May 19

Haines, Teddy Bear, 10¢ and 25¢, 5 each 55.00

OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist
 RNM = Reserve Not Met R = Reserve
 BIN = Buy it now

ALASKA GOLD TOKENS, CONT.



The A.Y.P.E. tokens feature a Miner with a pick-axe, the abbreviation D.W.T. marking the denomination, with date 1909 in round 1/4, round 1/2, and round ONE sizes. These tokens were originally made for the Alaska-Yukon Exposition in Seattle, Washington. They were sold in a small dark red box with the exposition seal in black ink on the cover and a black velvet interior. D.W.T. is an abbreviation for pennyweight.



In addition to the tokens from “The Coins of the Golden West” set, a few additional tokens marked “Alaska Gold” are known. The “2 Too-Wah” series made by Nathan Joseph of San Francisco is the most well known of these. Although dated 1862, the design was registered in 1910 and the tokens are marked as such. The tokens struck by Nathan Joseph are all solid gold. However one pair of his dies survived him and were used to strike large numbers of gilt-copper tokens in the 1940s.



A single token variety in ONE size, dated 1897 with a distinct Indian head obverse and a reverse style similar to the design on the Parka head tokens exists. This token is larger and heavier than the other ONE size tokens and all 3 of the known examples are worn. It is uncertain who made this token, why, or when.

A set of “restrike” tokens was made in 1979 by Art Smith of Florida. Both Art Smith and his father Sidney Smith also made a large quantity of California Gold tokens. The Alaska Gold restrike tokens are brass, but closely resemble the Pinch series of tokens. All lack the word “Pinch” from their design. Gold plated examples have been seen marketed as original Pinch tokens. (Illustrated at the top of the next column).

An Alaska Gold token die is known to reside at Pressed Metal Products in Vancouver, British Columbia. This die features mountains and a sunset. No surviving examples of an impression of this die are known.



The author has confirmed the following varieties:

Indian head Octagonal 1/4

2 varieties dated 1860

1 variety dated 1897 (Art Smith restrike)

5 varieties dated 1902 (one is an Art Smith restrike)

Indian head Round 1/4

1 variety dated 1860

4 varieties dated 1901

Indian head octagonal 1/2

5 varieties dated 1900 (one is an Art Smith restrike)

Indian head round 1/2

3 varieties dated 1899

Indian head octagonal ONE

2 varieties dated 1898

Indian head round ONE

5 varieties dated 1897 (one is an Art Smith restrike)

Parka head round 1/4

1 variety dated 1911

Parka head round 1/2

2 varieties dated 1911

Parka head round ONE

1 variety dated 1911

AYPE round 1/4

9 varieties dated 1909

AYPE round 1/2

11 varieties dated 1909

AYPE round ONE

4 varieties dated 1909

2 TooWah

6 die varieties dated 1862/1910

TOKEN SNAPSHOTS



Compliments of Candy Waugaman, above is a nice color post card showing Hall's Book store, successor to Chisholm & Hall. Tokens were issued by Chisholm & and Hall and by Hall's Bookstore.

This month we offer the 12½¢ token from Chisholm and Hall (B-12a) for \$153.00, postpaid.



A.Y.P.E. GOLD TOKENS

We are offering a set of three gold tokens from the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. Recently, a set sold on eBay for \$561.50. We can save you a little money at \$475, postpaid. The ¼ DWT grades XF, the ½ DWT grades AU and the 1 DWT grades XF. All are nice tokens. They are illustrated below enlarged and actual size.



FOR THE RECORD



(DUTCH HARBOR): Alaskan Taxi, Collect Five for a free ride. Thick clear plastic (3/16") with an embedded yellow plastic insert, about 40mm (submitted by Gary Fugate).



(DUTCH HARBOR): Carl's Bay View Inn, South Bering Sea Islands, A Traveler's Delight, Located Downtown. Black on red plastic, about 38mm (submitted by Gary Fugate).



DUTCH HARBOR: The Fishin' Bowl, No Cash Value. Brass, 25mm. Probably a video token (submitted by Gary Fugate).



KETCHIKAN: The New Deal, 5¢ and 50¢ in trade. Both aluminum, 24mm (submitted by Maria Pipher).

UNALASKA: M.R. Kab, 8-Token's 1-Ride Free. Gold on black plastic, about 40mm (submitted by Gary Fugate). Illustrated at the top of the next column.



Found in Skagway: Found in a wall in Skagway in a pouch with J.F. Anderson token. C.R. Light & Co., Geary St., S.F., Slot Machine Dealers. Possibly a salesman's sample, possibly provided to the merchant until their personal tokens arrived. Brass, 21mm with a 6-pointed star cut out. (eBay, PR 35.00).



HUDSON BAY CO.: Listed on eBay as a "One Beaver Trade Token." 18mm. Why am I having a hard time believing this one? (eBay - Price realized \$205.08).



KERGUELEN ISLANDS: Iles Kerguelen, 2003. On the reverse: "Vingt Francs Australe Regis, Essai .995 Fine Tantalum, Quatrieme Oz." Kerguelen is part of French Southern and Antarctic Lands, located in the southern Indian Ocean. The only inhabitants are scientific personnel. These were struck in tantalum (9), silver (90) and 5KT gold (4) and are 22mm. Tantalum is a dark gray metal with a specific gravity between silver and gold. These were made by Fred Zinkan, who has also made "patterns" for Enderbyland and McMurdo (both Antarctica).